



RRS NEWSLETTER

v. 1, Fall 2023

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

We are excited to present our first newsletter! We plan to publish one each semester to highlight our faculty, staff, students, and events. We are one of the fastest growing departments on campus in terms of majors and minors and are dedicated, more than ever, to building community with our students. We held our first student mixer (pictures on p.6), which was a great success! We are planning to host more events this coming fall. If you have any ideas about programming, please reach out to me (bakrania@sfsu.edu) or our Office Coordinator, Gautam Baksi (gautam@sfsu.edu).

If you would like to donate to RRS, click [here](#).



DR. FALU BAKRANIA

NEW FACULTY SPOTLIGHT



DR. OMAR ZAHZAH

We are excited to announce our newest faculty member, Dr. Omar Zahzah, who joined our department this semester. He is an Assistant Professor of Arab, Muslim, Ethnicities and Diaspora Studies (AMED), a minor in our department.

Dr. Zahzah holds a B.A. in Comparative World Literature and Creative Writing from California State University, Long Beach and a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of California, Los Angeles.

A scholar-activist of Lebanese Palestinian descent, Dr. Zahzah is the former Education and Advocacy Coordinator of *Eyewitness Palestine* and has been an organizer for Palestinian liberation for many years.

His current research focuses on how Black, Arab American and Palestinian creatives use cultural means to resist converging projects of securitization and globalizing paradigms of racialized policing and surveillance.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Eliana Hernandez earned a BA in both RRS and Criminal Justice Studies and a minor in Queer Ethnic Studies. She was awarded hood for the College of Ethnic Studies and Ceremonial Speaker for the 2021 and 2022 graduation ceremonies.

Since graduating, Eliana has been working at Sogorea Te' Land Trust, an Indigenous women-led organization returning Indigenous land to Indigenous hands. She is on the media and youth program teams. She is one of the two youth program coordinators, developing, facilitating, and running the Mitiini Numma after school decolonial youth program focused on land and and water-based learning.

With the help of Eliana's leadership, Mitiini Numma is heading into its first full year of programming this fall, serving BIPOC high school-aged youth in Huchiun territory (Oakland, Alameda, San Leandro, Berkeley).

In addition to co-leading the youth program, Eliana teaches at the Central Academic Recovery (CAR) Summer program held at Street Academy High School, piloting Mitiini Numma activities where she led walking tours with high schoolers in collaboration with the Physical Education department.



ELIANA HERNANDEZ



Our 2024 ceremony will be held on **Wednesday, May 22, 2024** in Jack Adams Hall from 4-7pm.

Save the date!

GRADUATION CEREMONIES

In the Spring of 2023, RRS held its 4th graduation ceremony. We were so happy to celebrate the successes of our students!

In 2020, we held our very first graduation via zoom. We are excited that we can now celebrate in person!

Visit the links here to see profiles of our amazing students:

[2020 graduates](#)
[2021 graduates](#)
[2022 graduates](#)
[2023 graduates](#)

REVISED COURSE! RRS 694: COMMUNITY PRAXIS

We revised our 694 course, and in the words Gopal Dayeneni, our current instructor, “This semester’s Community Praxis course is a joy to teach! In addition to having brilliant students, I’m connecting them with organizations that have been doing amazing work on Climate Justice, Indigenous Sovereignty and Prison Abolition.”

The following is a brief description of current student placements and projects:

PODER, People Organized to Demand Economic and Environmental Rights in San Francisco: Students are documenting and amplifying PODER’s work through articles. They are also researching the greenhouse gas mitigation impact of two of PODER’s programs: Hummingbird Farm and Bicus del Pueblo.

FRONTLINE CATALYSTS: Students are developing and delivering curriculum on climate justice and Ethnic Studies to middle school students in Oakland through a Climate Justice Education, advocacy, and youth-organizing project.

APEN, Asian Pacific Environmental Network: One student is working with APEN to support their organizing work on environmental justice with low-income Asian Immigrant communities in Oakland’s Chinatown and in Richmond.

MOVEMENT GENERATION: Justice and Ecology Project: Movement Generation is a collective that supports social movements in the defense and restoration of land, labor, and lifeways in support of ecological justice. Students are helping develop case-studies on bottom-up, community-led solutions to the climate crisis.



GOPAL DAYENENI

SACRED PLACES INSTITUTE FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES:

One student is supporting the development of a “Clean Energy Score Card” for indigenous communities in California and helping develop workshops and trainings for those communities on clean, community-controlled energy on native lands.

CRITICAL RESISTANCE: CR is dedicated to abolishing policing, prisons, and punishment as a way of dealing with harm and hurting. Students placed at CR are supporting their organizing and helping with community outreach.



stuff here on CFA actions, resource page how will impact students etc

CFA: STRIKE RESOURCES

[links here](#)

PALESTINE: RESOURCES

RRS joins the global community in the collective grief over the horrific state of the bombardment and ongoing genocide in Gaza.

This is important time for us to come together and understand the history of the colonization of Palestine and its indigenous struggle for sovereignty, freedom, and self-determination.

To that end, we've compiled a list of some educational and news resources.

[Decolonize Palestine](#)

[The Electronic Intifada](#)

[The Palestine Chronicle](#)

[Institute for the Critical Study of Zionism](#)

[Institute for Middle East Understanding](#)

[Al Jazeera](#)



VIGIL ORGANIZED BY THE GENERAL UNION OF PALESTINIAN STUDENTS (GUPS) AT SFSU, OCTOBER 2023

Some organizations working towards the liberation of Palestine:

[The General Union of Palestine Students at SFSU](#)

[Arab Resource and Organizing Center \(AROC\)](#)

[Palestine Center for Human Rights](#)

[International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network](#)

[Jewish Voice for Peace](#)



The Palestinian Guernica

The original painting by Picasso (1937) was in black and white. Many art critics consider it the most influential and powerful anti-fascist and war paintings in history.

The Tunisian artist, Mohamed Attia, remade it with the colors of the Palestinian flag.

FACULTY RESEARCH

Dr. César “che” Rodríguez was interviewed by “Millennials are Killing Capitalism,” a podcast that features scholarship produced by organizers and intellectuals. It is based on his article, *“Oscar Did Not Die in Vain”: Revelous Citizen Journalism, Righteous/Riotous Work, and the Gains of the Oscar Grant Moment in Oakland, California”*, published in 2021 in *Social Justice*, and details what the “Justice for Oscar Grant” movement accomplished after the BART police killing of the young, Black father, Oscar Grant in January 2009.

You can listen to the interview here!

[Part 1: “Record the Noise”](#)

[Part 2: “Popular Coercion From Below”](#)

Dr. Leora Kava and her three co-editors, published an anthology, *Indigenous Pacific Islander Eco-Literatures* (2022). It won the *Association for the Study of Literature and Environment Creative Writing Book Award*. The voices in this book call us to attention—to action!—at a time of great need. Pacific ecologies and the lives of Pacific Islanders are currently under existential threat due to the legacy of environmental imperialism and the ongoing impacts of climate change. While Pacific writers celebrate the beauty and cultural symbolism of the ocean, islands, trees, and flowers, they also bravely address the frightening realities of rising sea levels, animal extinction, nuclear radiation, military contamination, and pandemics.



**KYLE-WALLACE
JORDAN**

My name is Kyle Wallace-Jordan, and I am the College of Ethnic Studies Academic Counselor. I completed my BA in Communication Studies with a focus in Counseling at CSU Northridge (CSUN). During my undergraduate journey, I spent most of my time finding ways to impact and improve the careers of students of color. In doing so, I served as the Black Student Union president for 3 years and discovered that students needed a place to call their “Home Away from Home”. In collaboration with the Africana Studies department, we opened the CSUN Black House in February 2016. This space allowed us to develop intentional programming for students of color.

MEET OUR ADVISOR!

Although the Black House opened doors to many opportunities and resources for Black and Brown students, I knew there was more work to be done. I went on to initiate several programs that highlighted students of color in creative ways, and my efforts led to a 11% increase in the enrollment of Black students.

As your counselor, my mission is to ensure that students are receiving everything SFSU has to offer, from funding, internships, programs, and organizations. College is much more than going to class, earning units, and graduating; it is where the rest of your life will be determined. I aim to inspire students to get involved and make connections that will last a lifetime.

I look forward to meeting each of you and getting you one step closer to achieving your BA in Ethnic Studies. I am available for both in-person and virtual appointments; see my availability on EAB. I look forward to meeting each of you!

